



Escape Planning for Older Adults

Your risk of dying in a home fire is greater as you get older. Knowing what to do if there is a fire can make a big difference.

- Know two ways out of every room. Practice using both ways.
- Remove any items that may block your way out of the room or your home.
- Discuss your fire escape plan with family and neighbors. Contact your building manager or fire department to discuss your plan if you need extra help escaping.
- Keep eyeglasses, keys, hearing aids and a phone within reach next to your bed.
- Practice your home fire escape drill twice a year.

*Adults
65 and over
are twice as
likely to die
in fires.*

For more information and free resources, visit www.usfa.fema.gov.



FEMA



Fire Safety Checklist for Caregivers of Older Adults

Older adults are more likely to die in home fires because they may move slower or have trouble hearing the smoke alarm. Make sure the people you know are prepared and safe.

☒ Put a check in front of each statement that is true for your home.

Smoke Alarms

- ☐ Smoke alarms are on every level of the home.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are inside and outside sleeping areas.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are tested each month.
- ☐ Smoke alarm batteries are changed as needed.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are less than 10 years old.
- ☐ People can hear smoke alarms from any room.



Can everyone hear the alarm?

If not, consider another type of smoke alarm – like one that has a different sound or one that comes with a bed shaker or strobe light.

Escape Plan

- ☐ There is a fire escape plan that shows 2 ways out of every room.
- ☐ Exits are always clear and not blocked with furniture or other items.
- ☐ Everyone knows where the safe meeting place is outside the home.
- ☐ The escape plan works for everyone, including people who use a wheelchair, a hearing aid, or glasses.
- ☐ There is a phone near the bed to call a local emergency number in case of a fire.



Can everyone get out?

Make sure people who use a wheelchair or a cane can get to them and get out quickly. Tell them to keep glasses or hearing aids next to the bed.

Cooking Safety

- ☐ The cooking area has no items that can burn.
- ☐ People stay in the kitchen when they are frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food.

Smoking Safety

If they smoke, make sure they are a fire-safe smoker:

- ☐ People only smoke outside and never in bed.
- ☐ People put cigarettes out safely in an ashtray with a wide base that will not tip over.
- ☐ People never smoke around medical oxygen.

Heating Safety

- ☐ Space heaters are least 3 feet away from anything that can burn.
- ☐ People blow out candles before leaving the room.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms are located on each level of the home.
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms are less than 7 years old.

Electrical and Appliance Safety

- ☐ No electrical cords run under rugs.
- ☐ All electrical cords are in good condition and not broken or cut.
- ☐ People clean the dryer of lint after every use.
- ☐ All plug outlets are safe and do not feel warm when you touch them. (If they are warm, call the landlord or an electrician.)

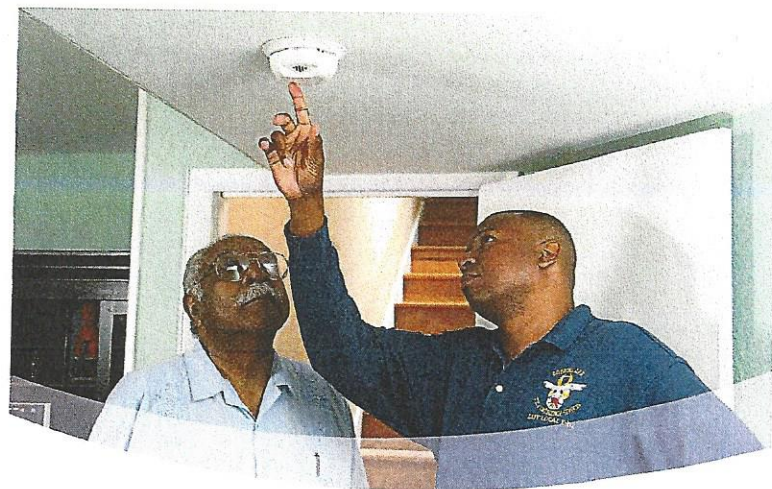
Learn more about fire prevention:
www.usfa.fema.gov

U.S. Fire
Administration



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Fire Safety for Older Adults and Their Caregivers

People over the age of 65 face the greatest risk of dying in a fire – more than 2 ½ times that of the general population. The U.S. Fire Administration wants older adults, their caregivers and all Americans to know that there are special precautions you can take to protect yourself and your home from fire.

Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms

The chance of surviving a home fire almost doubles with the initial warning from a smoke alarm.

- Install smoke alarms on each level of your home and inside and outside sleeping areas.
- Test them monthly and replace alkaline batteries at least once a year.
- Caregivers are encouraged to check the smoke alarms of those who are unable to do it themselves.

Plan Your Escape

Developing a fire escape plan around one's capabilities is a key element to fire safety!

- Have at least two exits from every room.
- If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure that you can go through the doorways.
- Unless instructed by the fire department, never use an elevator during a fire.
- If you live in a multi-story home, arrange to sleep on the ground floor near an exit.
- Speak to your family members, building manager or neighbors about your fire escape plan and practice it with them.

U.S. Fire Administration
www.usfa.fema.gov



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Be Safe Around Medical Oxygen

When using medical oxygen, the amount of oxygen in the air can increase. This means there is a higher risk of both fires and burns because it is easier for a fire to start and spread.

- Never smoke in a home where medical oxygen is used.
- Never use a candle, match, lighter or other open flame.
- Never use a fireplace, stove or other equipment fueled by gas, kerosene, wood or coal.
- Keep oil, grease and similar petroleum-based products away from oxygen valves. They can cause a spontaneous explosion.

Be Fire-Safe Around the Home

Careless smoking is a leading cause of home fire deaths among older adults.

- If you must smoke, never smoke in bed.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food. Use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Don't overload electrical outlets or extension cords.
- Properly maintain chimneys and keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from space heaters.
- Take special precaution if you are on medication that makes you drowsy.

**Remember, the prevention of fires is up to all of us ...
Fire is Everyone's Fight™.**